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A POEM;

SACRED TO THE MEMORY

OF

GEORGE WASHINGTON,

LATE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES, AND COM-
MANDER IN CHIEF OF THE ARMIES OF THE
UNITED STATES.

Adapted to the 22d of Feb. 1800.

By RICHARD ALSOP. K

" — borne to distant lands thy deeds sublime
Shall brighten as they mark the page of time,
And ages yet unborn, with glad acclaim,
Pronounce a WASHINGTON's illustrious name."

CHARMS OF FANCY.

HARTFORD:

PRINTED BY HUDSON AND GOODWIN.

1800.

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CHARLES OF LANCY.
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[REDACTED]

TO

Mrs. MARTHA WASHINGTON;

AS A SMALL TRIBUTE OF ESTEEM TO HER
VIRTUES,

AND

A TESTIMONY OF INDIVIDUAL SYMPATHY
IN HER AFFLICTION AND THE
PUBLIC MISFORTUNE,

THE FOLLOWING

POEM

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY

HER DEVOTED

AND

OBEDIENT SERVANT,

RICHARD ALSOP.

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A POEM.

WHY on this day when erst, in smiles array'd,
Each cheerful mien the signs of joy display'd ;
When the gay pomp of military show
With sprightly ardour gave each breast to glow ;
When the scarr'd veteran, fill'd with honest pride,
Resum'd his war-worn garb, and martial stride ;
When feeble age rekindling vigour knew,
And sportive childhood still more frolic grew ;
With added charms when beauty smil'd serene,
Prepar'd to grace the festive birth-night scene ?
Why o'er the city spreads this death-like gloom ?
Why round display'd the insignia of the tomb ?
Why sounds yon passing knell in accents slow,
And strings each heart in unison of woe ?
Why o'er those martial bands gay standards wave
In mournful pomp the colours of the grave ?
Why droops yon veteran soldier's hoary head,
His honest pride, his wonted ardour fled ?

Why heaves the breast of Age that tort'ring sigh?
 Why mark'd with gloom is Childhood's frolic eye?
 Why does the fair absorb'd in grief appear,
 As down her cheek flow steals the unbidden tear?

Has that dire fiend, who holds unseen his way
 In midnight's shades, or midst the glare of day,
 Again resum'd his wasteful fell career,
 Arm'd with new wrath with terrors more severe?
 Does each amid the gen'ral suff'ring mourn
 A friend or father from his bosom torn?
 Does age lament his sole surviving stay,
 Or childhood weep a parent snatch'd away?
 Do floods of grief the cheek of beauty lave
 To mark a father's or a lover's grave?
 Ah, no! the Pestilence' malignant breath
 Wastes not our cities with the blast of death,
 In icy chains the noxious fiend is bound,
 And purest gales salubrious breathe around.
 These marks of woe no private loss the cause,
 No private grief the tear from millions draws,
 But all a guardian, friend and sire deplore;
 The great, the immortal WASHINGTON's no more.
 One sign of mourning o'er the land is spread,
 Columbia weeps her guardian genius fled,
 While from her children bursts one general moan—
 'Our friend, our father, our protector's gone.'
 Hence this revolving day which gave him birth,
 Erst mark'd with joy and consecrate to mirth,

At this sad period gives our tears to flow,
And wakes anew the bitterness of woe.

Illustrious shade! the muse would fain essay
Her humble tribute to thy worth to pay,
With trembling hand amid thy laurels twine
A wreath of roses round thy hallow'd shrine;
Fain would her lyre to notes sublimer raise,
To sing thy virtues and record thy praise;
Yet midst thy various worth, thy talents rare,
The brilliant deeds that mark thy great career,
Where shall she fix? amidst that field of light
The splendid how select when all is bright?

Now, fancy-borne, mid vales enshrin'd in woods,
Where Mononghela roll'd its winding floods,
She sees thy morning sun's auspicious ray
Unfold the promise of the brightest day;
When calm midst scenes of death, from slaughter's
hand

Thou sav'dst the relics of the British band,
While veteran bosoms shook with panic dread,
Their general slain, all hope of safety fled,
Sure of their prey grim-smil'd the painted brood,
And yells of triumph echoed through the wood.

When stern Oppression o'er Columbia's plains
In pride exulting shook her ready chains,
Secure of conquest, and from realms afar
Sent forth the fiends of ravage and of war;

On thee thy country turn'd an eye of hope,
 In thee she saw her shield, her firmest prop,
 Gave thee her raw untutor'd bands to guide,
 Yet new to scenes of blood, in arms untried,
 To oppose a host inur'd to war's alarms,
 In slaughter nurtur'd, and unmatched in arms;
 And soon thy genius gave that host to mourn
 Its pride neglectful and its haughty scorn.

Foild on Boston's heights, the foe again
 With crouded navies shade the western main;
 With British legions join'd, a numerous throng,
 Of uncouth semblance and of barb'rous tongue,
 Germania sends;—the wide-extended host
 Fills with the gleam of arms Manhattan's coast.
 In vain Columbia's sons attempt the field,
 By numbers press'd her gallant squadrons yield,
 O'er heaps of slain insatiate carnage strides,
 And cold dismay o'er every heart presides.
 The foe exulting, of his victory vain,
 Already sees in bonds the captiv'd train,
 And waits but morn to seal Columbia's doom,
 And shroud her freedom in eternal gloom.

What pangs, great Chief, thy bosom must have
 wrung!

What cares on that portentous hour have hung;
 Yet still unruffled thy capacious mind
 Its arduous plans deliberately combin'd.

Led by thy care, amid the shades of night,
 The troops in solemn silence speed their flight;
 No sounds tumultuous their retreat betray,
 Or crowds confus'dly press'd obstruct the way,
 But Order reigns: while, sav'd from ruin's hand,
 Beyond all hope they reach the adverse strand.

When morning came the baffled foe beheld
 With deep surprize the wide-deserted field,
 His cares eluded, and the prostrate prey
 Torn, as by magic, from his grasp away.
 But still of conquest sure, with greedy eye
 He marks the period of subjection nigh;
 He sees 'gainst myriads fir'd with martial pride,
 With every means t' insure success supplied,
 Of ill-appointed troops, a scanty band,
 And terror wild pervade the hopeless land.
 Yet with that scanty band, too weak to oppose
 In open field the numbers of its foes,
 In partial conflict oft thou dar'dst their force,
 And check'd the conqueror in his wasteful course:
 Till thy keen eye the eventful moment view'd
 On which thy country's fate suspended stood;
 As o'er Cefarea's plains, by riot led,
 The foe in scornful negligence were spread.
 Tho' deepest glooms the face of night deform,
 And howls the spirit of the wintry storm,
 Tho' mounds of floating ice their passage stay,
 And snow and hail obstruct the slipp'ry way,

Cheer'd by thy voice the ardent bands proceed,
 Nor know fatigue, nor cold nor danger heed.
 While morn beheld on Trenton's blood-stain'd field,
 The war-tried veterans of Germania yield.

Scarce could the wondrous tale belief obtain,
 E'en sanguine fancy fear'd to find it vain.
 Soon spreads the welcome news from shore to shore,
 Hope's sunken eye is mark'd with smiles once more,
 Again, of new-born confidence possess'd,
 Each feels fresh ardour kindling in his breast.

Yet midst the brilliant deeds which rais'd thy
 name,
 And spread o'er distant climes thy martial fame,
 On every side thou saw'st new perils press,
 New scenes of trouble rise and dire distress.
 Scarce in the field a few brave troops remain'd,
 Fir'd by thy zeal, by gen'rous pride retain'd;
 Those few unpaid, with want severe distress'd,
 By cold assail'd, by hunger keen oppress'd;
 While, proud in added strength, the foe again
 Inspir'd with hopes more sanguine fought the plain.
 Yet with those few thou held'st his force at bay,
 His measures thwarted, or perplex'd his way,
 And kept his cohorts, with default'rous arms,
 Fatigued by watchings, harra's'd with alarms:
 Till Monmouth gave the wond'ring world to admire
 Thy Fabian coolness join'd with Cæsar's fire.

On that fam'd day, in equal contest tried,
 Thou met'st the flower of Britain's martial pride.
 There, when the sultry sky, with scorching breath,
 Join'd with the sword to speed the work of death,
 While faint with toil the squadrons droop'd around,
 And the spent soldier sunk without a wound,
 By vet'ran legions urg'd the ranks gave way,
 Thy prowess chang'd the fortune of the day;
 Mid walls of steel and showers of wasting fire,
 Thou led'st the charge, and mad'st the foe retire:
 Who gladly seiz'd the welcome veil of night
 To shroud his terrors, and conceal his flight.

Tho' check'd on northern plains, the foe survey'd
 Like painted clouds his dreams of conquest fade;
 Yet still o'er southern climes his wasteful course
 He roll'd impetuous, in resistless force;
 There proudly glorying in his might, he stood,
 Mid trophied piles, with laurels steep'd in blood,
 Nor deem'd that soon his prostrate pride must mourn
 Those blood-stain'd laurels from his temples torn;
 Till, from his flattering visions rous'd too late,
 He sees around him spread the snares of fate,
 His schemes all frustrate;—by thy skilful wiles
 Himself entangled mid destruction's toils.
 Depriv'd of aid, no shew of succour nigh,
 Desperate the fortune of the field to try,
 His numbers lessen'd and of hope bereft,
 Nor e'en in flight the means of safety left,

He yields his arms, submissive to thy doom,
 To captive chains transferr'd the victor's plume.
 Thus by thy genius forc'd their arms to yield
 The admiring world two mighty hosts beheld,
 Elate in confidence and martial pride;
 While York-Town's palms with Saratoga's vied.

Their force diminish'd and their ardour fled,
 Their bravest chieftain foil'd and captive led,
 The astonish'd foe, with consternation fill'd,
 Saw their last hope in death-like torpor chill'd,
 Their glitt'ring visions sunk; to rise no more;
 And wearied gave the fruitless contest o'er.
 Returning peace diffus'd her cheering ray,
 And raptur'd freedom hail'd the auspicious day.

Lo, the rich prize that urg'd thy efforts gain'd,
 Thy hopes fulfill'd, the glorious goal attain'd,
 On freedom's base thy country's weal secur'd,
 Her claims acknowledg'd and her rights ensur'd,
 From war's alarms in quiet calm repos'd,
 Thou saw'st the period of thy labours clos'd!
 Beheld, with joyful eye, the fav'ring hour
 To quit the staff of delegated power;
 And while a nation's raptur'd tears display'd
 The grateful tribute to thy virtues paid,
 Gladly retir'd'st, from scenes of active strife,
 To calm enjoyments of domestic life:
 Nor would'st accept Columbia's proffer'd meed,
 The grateful guerdon to thy toils decreed;

Thy patriot spirit all reward declin'd,
Save that which rises from the approving mind,
That high reward which conscious virtue knows,
The bliss supreme that rectitude bestows.

Thence by thy country call'd to toils of state,
Of public cares to assume the important weight,
She saw thy fame with added splendors glow,
New beams of glory radiate round thy brow.
—But from the arduous toil, the task severe,
The Muse despairing shrinks in conscious fear ;
To trace that brilliant course the hope were vain
Though eagle's pinions should her flight sustain :
For were the eye, with fix'd undazzled sight,
To mark the progress of yon orb of light ?
While morning vapours dim its golden rays,
Or fleecy clouds obstruct the noontide blaze,
Tho' each with ease beholds its blunted ray,
And notes its passage mid the realms of day,
Yet when in cloudless splendor pours its beam
No eye can bear the fierce effulgent stream.

Deeply engrav'd on every breast remain
The great events that mark'd thy civic reign—
Thou found'st Columbia sunk in pale decay,
Lost in disunion, to despair a prey,
Rais'd from that verge of death she soon became,
While added vigour nerv'd her glowing frame,
Reliev'd from penury smil'd her cheerful swains,
And prosperous plenty gladden'd o'er her plains ;

While foreign powers that saw, with scornful eye,
Her fancied term of dissolution nigh,
Beneath thy sway, adorn'd with fresher bloom,
Wond'ring beheld her rescued from the tomb.

When o'er pale Europe, fix'd in dread aghast,
War breath'd his dire exterminating blast,
Fell slaughter stalk'd with garments steep'd in gore,
And frown'd the fiend with rage unknown before ;
Thy watchful genius, with prudential care,
Preserv'd thy people from the woes of war.
Though guileful France her treacherous lures display'd,
Now threats employ'd, now artifice essay'd,
To plunge Columbia in the dire affray,
And o'er her counsels gain pestiferous sway,
And left no dark insidious means untried
From thee, their sire, thy children to divide ;
While in the accurs'd attempt base faction join'd,
To spread her poisons o'er the public mind,
And sought with gratitude's pretended claim,
And prostitution foul of freedom's name,
To gain the crowd, by semblance false betray'd,
By sounds deceiv'd, its dark designs to aid :
Mid slander's shafts, mid faction's clamours rude,
In calm unruffled dignity thou stood,
Still thy firm course with step unwavering held,
Nor check'd by murmurs, nor by threats repell'd,
But, with fix'd eye, undeviously pursued
The guiding star that mark'd thy country's good ;

And gave the baffled Gaul, at length, to know
That freedom's sons are anarchy's worst foe.

The louring cloud deep-fraught with ruin past,
In calm Columbia settling from the blast,
Her laws, her rights on firmer basis plac'd,
Her arm invigour'd, and her sinews brac'd;
With eager joy to Vernon's much-lov'd feat,
Its shades alluring, and its calm retreat,
Glad thou retir'd'st, imperial rule declin'd,
Power's splendid robes for vestments plain resign'd?
There, pleas'd o'er scenes of culture to preside,
To illumine its science and its labours guide,
Thou saw'st thy presence every bosom cheer,
One glad'ning smile of bliss around appear.
Yet when, anew, thy country claim'd thy aid,
Thou left'st the patriarch joys of Vernon's shade,
From haughty foes her threaten'd rights to shield,
And lead her squadrons in the embattled field.

Exalted Chief—in thy superior mind
What vast resource, what various talents join'd!
Temper'd with social virtue's milder rays,
There patriot worth diffus'd a purer blaze:
Form'd to command respect, esteem inspire,
Midst statesmen grave, or midst the social choir,
With equal skill the sword or pen to wield,
In council great, unequall'd in the field,
Mid glittering courts or rural walks to please,
Polite with grandeur, dignified with ease;

Before the splendors of thy high renown
 How fade the glow-worm lustres of a crown,
 How sink diminish'd in that radiance lost
 The glare of conquest, and of power the boast.
 Let Greece her Alexander's deeds proclaim,
 Or Cæsar's triumphs gild the Roman name,
 Stripp'd of the dazzling glare around them cast,
 Shrinks at their crimes humanity aghast;
 With equal claim to honour's glorious meed
 See Attila his course of havoc lead!
 O'er Asia's realms, in one vast ruin hurl'd,
 See furious Zingis' bloody flag unfurl'd,
 On base far-different from the conqueror's claim
 Rests the unsullied column of thy fame;
 His on the woes of millions proudly bas'd,
 With blood cemented and with tears defac'd;
 Thine on a nation's welfare fix'd sublime,
 By freedom strengthen'd and rever'd by time.
 He, as the Comet, whose portentous light
 Spreads baleful splendor o'er the glooms of night,
 With chill amazement fills the startled breast,
 While storms and earthquakes dire its course attest,
 And nature trembles, lest, in chaos hurl'd,
 Should sink the tott'ring fabric of the world.
 Thou, like the Sun, whose kind propitious ray
 Opes the glad morn and lights the fields of day,
 Dispels the wintry storm, the chilling rain,
 With rich abundance clothes the smiling plain,
 Gives all creation to rejoice around,
 And life and light extends o'er nature's utmost bound.

Though shone thy life a model bright of praise,
 Not less the example bright thy death portrays.
 When, plung'd in deepest woe, around thy bed,
 Each eye was fix'd, despairing sunk each head,
 While nature struggled with severest pain,
 And scarce could life's last lingering powers retain:
 In that dread moment, awfully serene,
 No trace of suffering mark'd thy placid mien;
 No groan, no murmuring plaint escap'd thy tongue;
 No louring shadows on thy brow were hung;
 But calm in Christian hope, undamp'd with fear,
 Thou saw'st the high reward of virtue near,
 On that bright meed in surest trust repos'd,
 As thy firm hand thine eyes expiring clos'd,
 Pleas'd, to the will of heaven resign'd thy breath,
 And smil'd as nature's struggles clos'd in death.

Ill-fated Country—lo, of aid bereft,
 Thy spear is broken and thy buckler cleft!
 What arm shall now a firm support bestow,
 And shield thee harmless from the threat'ning foe;
 Who, mid the storm, with fearless hand shall guide
 Thy course in safety o'er the troubled tide?
 See Faction lift on high his hateful head,
 O'er his dark brow unwonted smiles are spread,
 His lurid eye malignant triumph glares,
 And joy infernal every feature wears!
 For now no more that piercing eye he fears,
 No more that voice, with terror thrill'd, he hears;

That eye, from whose bright beam he shrunk dismay'd,
And veil'd his treasons in the midnight shade;
That fateful voice which levell'd in the dust
His plots nefarious, and his high-raisd trust;
For, lo, in slumbers of the grave repos'd,
Hush'd is that voice, that eye in darkness clos'd!

Is't not enough that o'er these fated shores,
In sullen gloom, the fiend of discord lours;
With foreign foes domestic traitors join,
Our weal to batter and our rights resign?
That Pestilence, with wide destroying hand,
Sweeps in fell triumph o'er the mourning land,
Marks with new victims each returning year,
And gains fresh fury in his dread career;
While dooms his rage unsparing each to mourn
The ties of kindred or affection torn,
And, o'er a friend's or brother's early grave,
The tear to stream, the sigh of anguish heave?
Are all these ills, are all these suff'rings vain;
Could not a nation's doom a respite gain?
But while the cloud, portending ruin, spreads,
And deeper rolls the thunder o'er our heads,
At this dread period must his country's stay,
Torn by the cruel hand of fate away,
Must WASHINGTON to realms of splendor borne,
Thus leave his people guardless and forlorn?—
Unpitied heaven!—But, lo, from opening skies,
What white-rob'd form descending meets my eyes!

Bright beams of glory o'er his temples twine,
 And in his eyes celestial lightnings shine.
 He speaks ;—in silence all is hush'd around,
 And sinks the listning breeze in calm profound.
 ' Short-sighted mortal ! by what fury driven
 ' Dar'ft thou arraign the high behests of heaven,
 ' What rashness wild, what madness of despair,
 ' Prompts thee to doubt the Almighty's guardian
 ' care ?
 ' Say, dost thou murmur that the harvest's Lord
 ' The ripen'd ear has in his garner stor'd ?
 ' Would'ft thou complain that, freed from ills of
 ' life,
 ' From this low vale of sorrow and of strife,
 ' With honours laden, and in full of time,
 ' To realms of joy and seats of bliss sublime,
 ' Great WASHINGTON has wing'd his raptur'd way ;
 ' And walks with angels mid the blaze of day ?
 ' Learn that the ills you plain are light to those,
 ' Deep-stamp'd in blood, offending Europe knows.
 ' Behold, sublime that mighty Angel stand !
 ' The Book of Fate unfolded in his hand,
 ' His sun-bright mien dispensing terrors dire,
 ' A cloud his footstool, and his robes of fire,
 ' Around, obedient to his high decree,
 ' Employ'd his ministers of vengeance see,
 ' O'er guilty realms the wrath of heaven to pour,
 ' And scourge mankind with ills unknown before !
 ' Tho' o'er these shores the purple fiend presides,
 ' And mid the tainted air in triumph rides ;

' O'er eastern regions see yon demon lour,
 ' Yon hideous fury bath'd in human gore!
 ' Lo! in her train what lesser fiends appear,
 ' War, famine, havoc, desolation drear!
 ' She, the worst monster hell's dark limits know,
 ' The bane of law, religion's deadliest foe,
 ' With craft insatiate cruelty combines,
 ' And fair in freedom's stolen vestments shines;
 ' While, lur'd by phantom fires and flattering wiles,
 ' The prey suspectless rushes to her toils,
 ' Where'er around her with'ring step is seen
 ' The harvest dies and fades the blasted green,
 ' Order proscrib'd retires, and, smote with dread,
 ' Pale Industry conceals his hunted head,
 ' Religion views his servants stretch'd in blood,
 ' And hurl'd to earth the altars of his God,
 ' Right sinks before her trampled in the dust,
 ' And yields the reins to licence and to lust:
 ' Nor sex nor state can stay her brutal rage,
 ' The tears of childhood, nor the locks of age;
 ' Vain beauty pleads;—no shelter from the sword
 ' To her lov'd spouse the consort's arms afford,
 ' Stabb'd on the mother's breast the infant dies,
 ' And spurn'd contemptuous age expiring lies:
 ' With gloating eyes she feasts on human woes,
 ' And drinks the blood warm-trickling as it flows.
 ' Then cease to murmur at the afflicting rod,
 ' But bow submissive to the will of God,
 ' And taught by others woes, convicted, own
 ' That mercy e'en in chastening still is shown.

' Freed from the world; resign'd its load of cares,
 ' Though WASHINGTON the bliss of angels shares,
 ' Yet, not unmindful of Columbia's weal,
 ' Still glows his breast with love and patriot zeal,
 ' Her guardian Spirit, still with shielding hand,
 ' He turns the storm that thickens o'er her land,
 ' With generous pride her ardent youth inspires,
 ' Directs her statesmen and her warriors fires:
 ' His name, his bright example long shall prove
 ' Her bond secure of union and of love,
 ' Shall urge her sons to emulate his worth,
 ' And wake each slumb'ring virtue into birth:
 ' Adhering firmly to his precepts pure
 ' To latest time her freedom shall endure,
 ' If not seduc'd, to foreign wiles a prey,
 ' She madly cast the precious boon away.'—
 —Fleets the fair form; but still the voice I hear,
 Still its last accents strike upon my ear,
 Reprov'd and humbled I my error see,
 And bend in reverence to the high decree.

Ye Youth, Columbia's pride, to whom has heaven
 In sacred trust her future welfare given;
 On whom devolves the high the important charge,
 Her rights to guard, her happiness enlarge;
 Fix'd to whose course immutably remains
 Her bliss or woe, her liberty or chains!
 O let your PATRIOT FATHER'S precepts rest
 Deep in your hearts indelibly impress!

Let his example bright your souls inspire,
 To virtue kindle and to glory fire;
 Teach you the yells of Faction to despise,
 Unmask his arts and strip his thin disguise;
 To spurn, with generous pride and mark'd disgrace,
 The attempts insidious of a foreign race
 To spread their baleful influence o'er your land,
 Direct its councils and its strength command,
 What means so'er let them end to gain they try,
 Or force employ, or artifice apply,
 If with the tiger's glare they mark the prey,
 Or crafty serpent's subtleties display,
 Nor e'er seduc'd let discord's fiends abhorr'd
 Tempt you to draw the partizanal sword,
 Your country's breast to wound with mortal blow,
 And lay the bulwark of her safety low:
 But, friends to order, firm, in union'd band,
 Around your government collected stand,
 That edifice on equal freedom rear'd
 By reason sanction'd, and by truth rever'd
 Let dire disunion, party rage expire,
 And one great object all your efforts fire,
 Bid local hate and jealousy subside,
 The offspring mean of ignorance and pride;
 And teach the world Columbia's sons alone
 One glorious object of contention own,
 By virtuous acts, disinterested zeal,
 And fond devotion to their country's weal,
 With unremitting ardor to pursue
 The path that WASHINGTON has op'd to view.

Ere yet the Muse in silence close the strain,
While still her hands the sinking lyre retain,
To thee, **RESPECTED MOURNER**, would she pay
A solemn tribute in the heart-felt lay,
Awake the strings to sympathetic woe,
And bid the notes of consolation flow.
But who shall venture with presumption rude,
On sorrow's sacred silence to intrude;
May no rash voice disturb that deep repose,
AFFLICTED MOURNER hallow'd be thy woes !



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Ere yet the Mute in silence close the strain,
 While still her hands the sinking lyre sustain,
 To thee, Raptur'd Mourner, would the gay
 A solemn tribute in the heart-felt lay,
 Awake the strings to sympathetic woe,
 And bid the notes of consolation flow,
 But who shall venture with presumption rude,
 On sorrow's sacred shrine to intrude?
 May no vain voice thy least deep note,
 Afflicted Mourner, know'd be thy woe!

